

## Chapters Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five

### Standards Focus: Author's Style

**Style** is a literary technique used by an author to create a piece of literature that reveals the author's uniqueness. Word choice, figurative language, imagery, rhythm, sentence structure, foreshadowing, symbolism, use of dialect, and other literary devices, all work together to make an author's writing distinctive. The style in which an author writes influences how well we understand and identify with the literature, and reveals an author's biases and beliefs.

Harper Lee uses natural techniques of style which helped to make *To Kill a Mockingbird* such a literary success. She uses dialogue, dialect, a conversational tone, allusions, some very complex vocabulary, and figurative language extensively. However, depending upon the character, some of these elements may change. For example, Aunt Alexandra speaks very differently from Mayella Ewell, and Lee has been able to truly capture these characters by deliberately varying the tone and vocabulary for each. Her mastery at depicting both of these characters, and her ability to weave the story between the two, makes her style unique and admirable.

*Directions: Identify the elements of style that are being used in each of the following excerpts from Chapters 24-25, choosing from the box below. Be sure to use a dictionary or your literature book if you need help. Stylistic elements may be used more than once, and there may be more than one right answer for each. As you identify the elements of style that have been used, explain the effect that these techniques have on the reader. An example has been done for you.*

figurative language	repetition	sensory images
short, concise sentences	complex vocabulary	symbolism
stream of consciousness	long, wordy sentences	plain, simple vocabulary
use of allegory	formal tone	conversational tone
use of dialect	clear rhythm pattern	foreshadowing
imagery	flashback	dialogue
slang	colloquialisms	

**Ex.** "From the kitchen, I heard Mrs. Grace Merriweather giving a report in the livingroom on the squalid lives of the Mrunas, it sounded like to me. They put the women out in huts when their time came, whatever that was; they had no sense of family—I knew that'd distress Aunty—they subjected children to terrible ordeals when they were thirteen; they were crawling with yaws and earworms, they chewed up and spat out the bark of a tree into a communal pot and then got drunk on it."

**Elements of style:** use of long, wordy, disconnected sentence, in a conversational tone; generally a plain, simple vocabulary with the use of a colloquialism ("when their time came").

**Effect:** The use of a long, wordy, and disconnected sentence in the conversational tone gives the feeling that Scout is repeating almost word-for-word the story Mrs. Merriweather is telling. Of course, Scout was not able to hear and tell every word, so it has a sort of feeling that she is repeating the parts she "caught" of the story. Rather than just telling the reader about the Mrunas, Lee gives us the feeling of catching the story right along with Scout.

1. "The gentle hum of ladies' voices grew louder as she opened the door: 'Why, Alexandra, I never saw such charlotte...just lovely...I never can get my crust like this, never can...who'd've thought of little dewberry tarts...Calpurnia?...who'da thought it...anybody tell you that the preacher's wife's ...nooo, well she is, and that other one not walkin' yet...'"

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**Elements of style:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. "The ladies were cool in fragile pastel prints: most of them were heavily powdered but unrouged; the only lipstick in the room was Tangee Natural. Cutex Natural sparkled on their fingernails, but some of the younger ladies wore Rose. They smelled heavenly. I sat quietly, having conquered my hands by tightly gripping the arms of the chair, and waited for someone to speak to me."

**Elements of style:** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. "'S-s-s Grace,' she said, 'it's just like I was telling Brother Hutson the other day. 'S-s-s Brother Hutson,' I said, 'looks like we're fighting a losing battle, a losing battle.' I said, 'S-s-s it doesn't matter to 'em one bit. We can educate 'em till we're blue in the face, we can try till we drop to make Christians out of 'em, but there's no lady safe in her bed these nights.'"

**Elements of style:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. "To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw. Funny thing, Atticus Finch might've got him off scot free, but wait—? Hell no. You know how they are. Easy come, easy go. Just shows you, that Robinson boy was legally married and all that, but when it comes down to the line the veneer's mighty thin. Nigger always comes out in 'em."

**Elements of style:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

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